



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2005

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COUNTY TO DEMONSTRATE WEST NILE VIRUS PRECAUTIONS

Officials Will Discuss County Efforts, Protection Recommendations for Public

WHAT: County officials will demonstrate and inform the public of actions they are taking to combat West Nile virus now that the mosquito season is here. They will provide information on human health risks and personal protection, and ask the public to eliminate standing water around their homes. They will also address the threat to domestic animals and availability of the horse vaccine.

WHO: Supervisor Greg Cox, District 1
Gary Erbeck, Director, Department of Environmental Health
Dr. Nancy Bowen, County Public Health Officer
Dr. Nikos Gurfield, County Veterinarian

WHEN: Friday, April 8 at 10 a.m.

WHERE: Fenton Pond (Off I-5, on Hollister St. between Main St. and Palm Ave.)
Signs will be posted to direct media. (Thomas Guide, p.1330, B-6)

VISUALS: Demonstrations of equipment used to distribute larvicide; samples of larvicide granules; mosquito larvae and live mosquito-eating fish; mosquito traps; insect repellent; West Nile virus educational materials.

Granules containing naturally occurring bacteria, that act as biological larvicide, will be spread by backpack blowers, quad runners, truck and boat on difficult-to-access areas of the pond. Designed to dissolve in water, the larvicide effectively kills the developing mosquito larvae. Laboratory tests have shown the larvicide does not pose a threat to people or wildlife.

BACKGROUND: West Nile virus, common throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East, was first reported in the U.S. in 1999. Last year in the U.S., 2,470 human cases were confirmed and there were 88 human deaths. Last year in San Diego County, two human cases of West Nile virus were diagnosed, however one case was determined to be acquired in Port of Los Angeles and the other case was undetermined. In addition, 34 dead birds and two horses tested positive for the virus last year in the county. Controlling mosquito breeding, and eliminating backyard breeding sites, is key to preventing the spread of the virus.

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